

# DISTRICT 5 NEWS

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Greetings:

The District 5 News is a newsletter designed to keep the residents of Alameda County's Fifth District informed about local, state, and federal issues. The federal government is facing a ½ trillion dollar budget deficit, as a result the state government and the county government are also facing deficits. Therefore, it is especially important for people to stay informed about important legislative issues that affect our communities in our attempt to build a stronger network of neighborhood support based services. We hope the District 5 News is a useful and engaging source of information about the issues that concern you the most.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT/ LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### *E-Voting Machines: Better then the Paper Ballot?*

Senate Majority Leader Don Perata recently introduced urgent legislation to ban the use of touch screen voting machines across California during the November election. This bill proposes moving up a 2006 deadline set by the Secretary of State requiring touch-screen machines to produce a paper record of voters' ballots. Some computer scientists argue that the machines are susceptible to undetectable error and fraud.

Secretary of State Kevin Shelley is seriously considering Perata's bill as one of his options while he pressures manufacturers and county officials for greater security precautions, said Carol Dahmen, spokeswoman for the Secretary. If Shelley does not ban use of touch screen voting machines in the upcoming presidential election, Perata is expected to ask the Legislature to take action.

While the electronic machines raise concerns, it cannot be overlooked that paper ballots have caused problems in the past and motivated change to the new electronic system. We all remember what happened in Florida, and want to ensure that such a debacle does not happen again.

Proponents of touch screen voting list several advantages:

- The machines can switch to a language of the voter's choice,
- They can easily be adapted for use by the blind,
- They count votes in an instant,
- They prevent spoiled ballots - for example, by refusing to allow the voter to select two candidates in a vote where they are only allowed to select one.

The Voting Systems and Procedures Panel, an advisory panel to the Secretary of State, recommended this Thursday that Shelley should ban the use of 15,000 touch-screen voting machines made by Diebold Election Systems from the Nov. 2 general election. As of the date of this printing the recommendation affects Diebold touch-screen machines in San Diego, Solano, Kern and San Joaquin counties, but the panel will be considering additional touch screen voting systems next week.

However, a problem local county governments, face if touch screen machines are banned in the November election is that the old paper ballot voting machines were destroyed when the new touch-screen machines were certified. If the touch screen machines are banned than the county would have to use optical scan machines which are not very technologically advanced.

## **CALIFORNIA**

### ***November: Big Election for State, over 50 Initiatives Trying to Make the Ballot.***

This November look for out for a wave of initiatives all trying to get a spot on the ballot. Issues range from education, abortion rights for minors, defining legal marriage, and Indian Gaming Compacts.

Keep your eye out for initiatives such as the California Scholarship Opportunity Act which would provide state scholarship opportunities for parents who have children in schools determined to be underperforming. This initiative appears to be a new attempt at school vouchers even though past attempts have failed with over 70% disapproval rates in the 1993 and 2000 elections. This initiative is sure to generate a renewed dialogue on state education spending.

In November a number of state ballot initiatives will attempt to gravel with California's unprecedented \$15 billion dollar deficit. To date state revenue sources do not cover current expenditures. Aggravated by the Governor's refusal to raise taxes, the initiative process is one way that the state can avoid cuts in state programs.

The Governor's proposed budget includes critical cuts to important social programs at the state level and also strips local government of \$1.3 Billion property tax dollars. The money taken away from county government will be redirected to the Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF), a property tax that shifts a portion of local property tax going to counties, cities and other local agencies to be redirected to education. Unfortunately this shift of property tax will undoubtedly mean additional cuts to some other county programs.

For more information on upcoming initiatives go to <http://www.ss.ca.gov> Click on elections and voter information to find the initiatives pending for the November election.

## **ALAMEDA COUNTY**

### ***Measure A Victorious with 83.2% in District 5, 71% Overall. What are the Next Steps?***

Voters overwhelmingly passed Measure A this March. This Health Care initiative which will raise an estimated \$90 million annually for county health care—to preserve emergency and trauma services, to ensure access to primary care, preventive care, and mental health services. This is a victory and a major step in helping preserve public hospitals and clinics in Alameda County.

Now the Medical Center's Blue Ribbon Task Force and the Board of Supervisors are developing plans to address the Medical Center's budget deficit, streamline its operations, reduce costs and increase revenues. Through this process we are working to ensure that all Measure A funds are wisely spent on the county's health care system, and that we meet the increasing needs of access to health care, invest in prevention and enhance mental health and public health services.

All of the money raised by Measure A will go toward Health Care, 75% going directly to the Alameda County Medical Center. The remaining 25% of the revenue will go toward: Public Health, Behavioral Health Care Services (drug and alcohol treatment), Environmental Health, and the clinics and non-profit organizations that support the public hospital system. Measure A is an essential element but only part of a developing plan to put the Medical Center on solid financial ground. The Center's board of trustees has brought in a consultant, Cambio Health Solutions, and given it the task of making changes to make the system financially stable.

Thank you for supporting Public Health Care! Through the ½ cent sales tax, Measure A will keep critical programs open within the Medical Center and save lives in Alameda County.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The County is facing another difficult year of budget cuts! On April 14th, the Alameda County Budget Workgroup met to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on how to close our \$98.4 million gap for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. Cutting over \$98 million from the County Budget is just the first step in balancing our budget, and does not include the further hits to local government that will be contained in the State Budget, once the Legislature adopts it. The next Budget workgroup will be on May 14th at 11:00am, likely at the County Conference Center, 125--13th St., 4th Floor. For more information about the Budget Workgroup call (510) 272-6695.

**Berkeley Mayor Summer Job Youth Program April 28<sup>th</sup>** For more info log onto [www.oaklandwib.org](http://www.oaklandwib.org)

## **COMMUNITY CORNER**

### ***Stepping up to the Plate to Address Community Concerns through Activism***

Cambodian Community Development, Inc. (CCDI) is a grassroots volunteer-based organization founded by a group of concerned community activists in 1997. CCDI assists Cambodian refugees in Oakland to overcome social, cultural and economic barriers to reach independence and self-sufficiency. Currently, the agency serves approximately 500-1,000 refugees per year. The agency involves the community in every aspect of its services, from developing program ideas and evaluating program effectiveness to direct service through ESL classes for all ethnic backgrounds. Realizing the critical health care needs of their community, CCDI Youth Coordinator Sam Duch organized a number of energetic high school youth within the program to volunteer on the Measure A Campaign helping to pass the health care initiative. For more info on CCDI call (510) 535-6120

### ***Forging Important Partnerships to Create Jobs in Oakland***

The Regional Technical Training Center under the leadership of Executive Director Bernard Ashcraft is doing some great work in West Oakland. In a time when more and more people are facing unemployment, the training center provides important job training to CalWORKS clients and is forging partnerships with Bay Area businesses. The Business Roundtable, an RTTC Project made up of more than 40 representatives from Industry, Education, and government is sponsoring Project 100, a program that identifies 100 jobs that pay a living wage in the Bay Area and trains people to become eligible for those jobs. The training center is working with companies such as PG&E, SBC, Kaiser, Chiron and UC Berkeley. RTTC will began allied health training late summer in three modules: Medical Records Clerks, Medical Insurance Coders, and Pharmacy Assistance. This will be done in collaboration with Kaiser, Eden Medical Center, the Alameda County Medical Center, and Peralta Community College District. For more information on the program call (510) 444-6441.

Contact us with your feedback.

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